UNITED
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Secretariat

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ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTION

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information

Subject: REGULATIONS FOR THE CONTROL AND LIMITATION OF DOCUMENTATION

Addendum

ATTRIBUTION OF AUTHORSHIP IN UNITED NATIONS DOCUMENTS, PUBLICATIONS AND OTHER OFFICIAL PAPERS

A. General principles

1. The present instruction revises, on an experimental basis, the Organization's policy towards the attribution of authorship as set forth in administrative instruction ST/AI/189/Add.6/Rev.3 of 19 March 1990. The present revision defines a policy in which attribution of authorship will be permitted for most United Nations materials of a technical nature. It allows for flexibility in the choice of materials where authorship may be attributed and in the form in which attribution is made. It also seeks to establish appropriate safeguards to ensure that attribution is consistent with relevant legislative mandates and the responsibilities of the Secretary-General in determining United Nations policies. In case of doubt regarding the relevance and interpretation of the legislative authority, the Office of Legal Affairs will be consulted and its views will be forwarded to the Publications Board.

2. The rules on attribution should be read in conjunction with those describing the layout of covers and title-pages of publications (ST/AI/189/Add.2 and Amend.1).

3. The rules on attribution of authorship apply to all United Nations documents and publications, as well as to papers prepared in the Secretariat in connection with meetings, seminars and technical cooperation projects and newsletters and working papers intended for distribution outside the Secretariat.

4. The revised attribution policy, which is in consonance with the new directions being taken in publications policy by a number of specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as the evolving practices in Member States, has several fundamental objectives: (a) to acknowledge original intellectual contributions in the preparation of United Nations publications and reports; (b) to facilitate a dialogue with the international academic and professional communities in order to advance United Nations objectives in relation to political, economic and social issues of global concern and thereby enhance the image of the United Nations; (c) to provide appropriate recognition of intellectual accomplishment for staff working in the Organization; (d) to assure current and potential staff members, known to be experts in their respective fields, that their professional work in the Organization would be recognized among their peers; (e) to increase staff responsibility in the creation of high-quality publications and reports; and (f) to enhance the sales potential of United Nations publications.

5. In the implementation of the revised policy and in an effort to decentralize and otherwise facilitate decisions relating to attribution of authorship, the substantive author departments shall bear responsibility for approving the requests for attribution in individual cases. They shall also decide what form such attribution will take. This might range from attribution to one or two authors or an organizational unit on the title-page, or a broader acknowledgement later in the front matter when the work in question is a collaborative effort. In consultation with the heads of other departments and offices responsible for design, editing, typesetting or translation, author departments would decide upon the form of acknowledgement for these services.

6. Attribution of authorship will not be considered in the following categories:

(a) Official records: a series of printed publications relating to the proceedings of organs or conferences of the United Nations;

(b) United Nations documents: text and related material issued for official use under a United Nations document symbol, regardless of the form of production;

(c) Public information material: brochures, pamphlets, press releases, flyers, catalogues and other materials designed primarily to inform the public about United Nations activities. For the purpose of the present instruction, public information material offered in publications may have attribution;

(d) Materials of a highly political nature or texts expressly designed to formulate or state official United Nations policy.

7. It should be noted that the wishes of individuals who may not choose to be attributed in a particular publication for a valid and appropriate reason must be taken into consideration by the author departments.

## B. Signature of forewords and prefaces

8. In publications prepared by the Secretariat, a foreword or preface may be signed only by the Secretary-General or as appropriate and upon his instructions, by an under-secretary-general, an assistant secretary-general or an official who is authorized to assume responsibility for the publication.

## C. Letters of transmittal

9. Committees or groups outside the Secretariat that wish to acknowledge assistance in the preparation of a report provided by members of the Secretariat should be advised that the appropriate way of doing so is by mentioning the department or office concerned in their letter of transmittal addressed to the Secretary-General. They may also refer by name to relevant members of the Secretariat.

## D. Attribution to consultants

10. As a general rule, attribution or other reference to consultants may be made at the discretion of the Secretary-General, consistent with the provisions of the present instruction.

11. When a consultant is engaged to prepare a report of the Secretary-General, usually in response to a request from a legislative body, authorship of the report shall not be attributed to the consultant. A reference may in appropriate cases be made in a footnote to the consultant's contribution to the report.

12. Notwithstanding the above, it should be noted that all rights (title, copyright and patent rights) to any work remain with the United Nations. In the case of consultants, provision is made through the use of the United Nations special services agreement for consultants or in the United Nations general conditions for general contracts. In the absence of these clauses in the contract, the United Nations should enter into specific written agreement with the consultant concerning ownership of copyright in the work. Such an agreement would provide that, to the extent the consultant has any copyright or other intellectual property rights in the work being produced and attributed to him or her, he or she thereby irrevocably transfers all such rights to the United Nations. In case of doubt, the Office of Legal Affairs should be consulted. All staff members and consultants, as in past practice, must convey to the Publications Board any requests for reprints of works.

## E. Attribution to the United Nations and other specialized agencies

13. Where the United Nations and one or more of the specialized agencies or the International Atomic Energy Agency are jointly responsible for the preparation of a publication, their names and emblems may appear on the cover and title-page as authors (see administrative instructions ST/AI/189/Add.2 and Amend.1,

paras. 19 and 20, and ST/AI/189/Add.21, paras. 6-9, on the use of the United Nations emblem on documents and publications).

### F. Papers and articles by government representatives and by authors outside the United Nations

14. Except as indicated elsewhere in the present instruction, papers and articles prepared by government representatives or officials or by authors outside the United Nations Secretariat may be attributed to them.

### G. Attribution to a Government, foundation or other body

15. Where a Government, foundation or other body has cooperated or is jointly responsible for preparation with the United Nations of a paper or a publication, it may be given appropriate mention on the cover and the title-page in such terms as the following:

> "Prepared in cooperation with the Ministry of ... of the Government of ...".

Alternatively, acknowledgement may be made in a foreword or preface.

### H. Attribution in parliamentary documents

16. United Nations documents normally bear, in addition to a title corresponding to the agenda item, a subtitle indicating in general terms the entity of authorship or sponsorship. In documents prepared for a body that does not have a sessional agenda, the main title may contain that information.

Examples:
- Report of the Secretary-General
- Note by the Secretary-General
- Algeria; draft resolution
- Working paper prepared by the Secretariat
- Letter from the Permanent Representative of ... to the United Nations addressed to ...
- Report of the Special Committee on ...

17. Documents originating in the Secretariat shall be attributed to the Secretary-General if they deal with policy questions that engage the responsibility of the Secretary-General or if they involve formal acts carried out by the Secretary-General under a provision of the Charter of the United Nations or of the rules of procedure of an organ or in accordance with a request expressly addressed to the Secretary-General. Documents dealing with detailed

and technical matters not requiring policy clearance are normally attributed to the Secretariat.

18. Documents may, as appropriate, be attributed, by official title only, to the presiding officer of a major conference, regional commission or other United Nations body. When a document is attributed to a rapporteur or special rapporteur, the name - and, if a rapporteur, the country - may also be given.

## I. Disclaimers

19. When a publication contains component parts attributed to individual authors within the Organization, the prefatory matter may contain a statement indicating the position of the United Nations towards such material. Such a disclaimer might in a typical case read:

> "The views expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations."

## J. Departure from the rules

20. Departure from the present instruction will be permitted only in accordance with the policies and decisions of the Publications Board.

## K. Review mechanism

21. The policies and practices established under the present instruction will be reviewed after a period of two years from the date of issuance with a view to ensuring their judicious and balanced application in a manner that serves to advance the best interests of the Organization.

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